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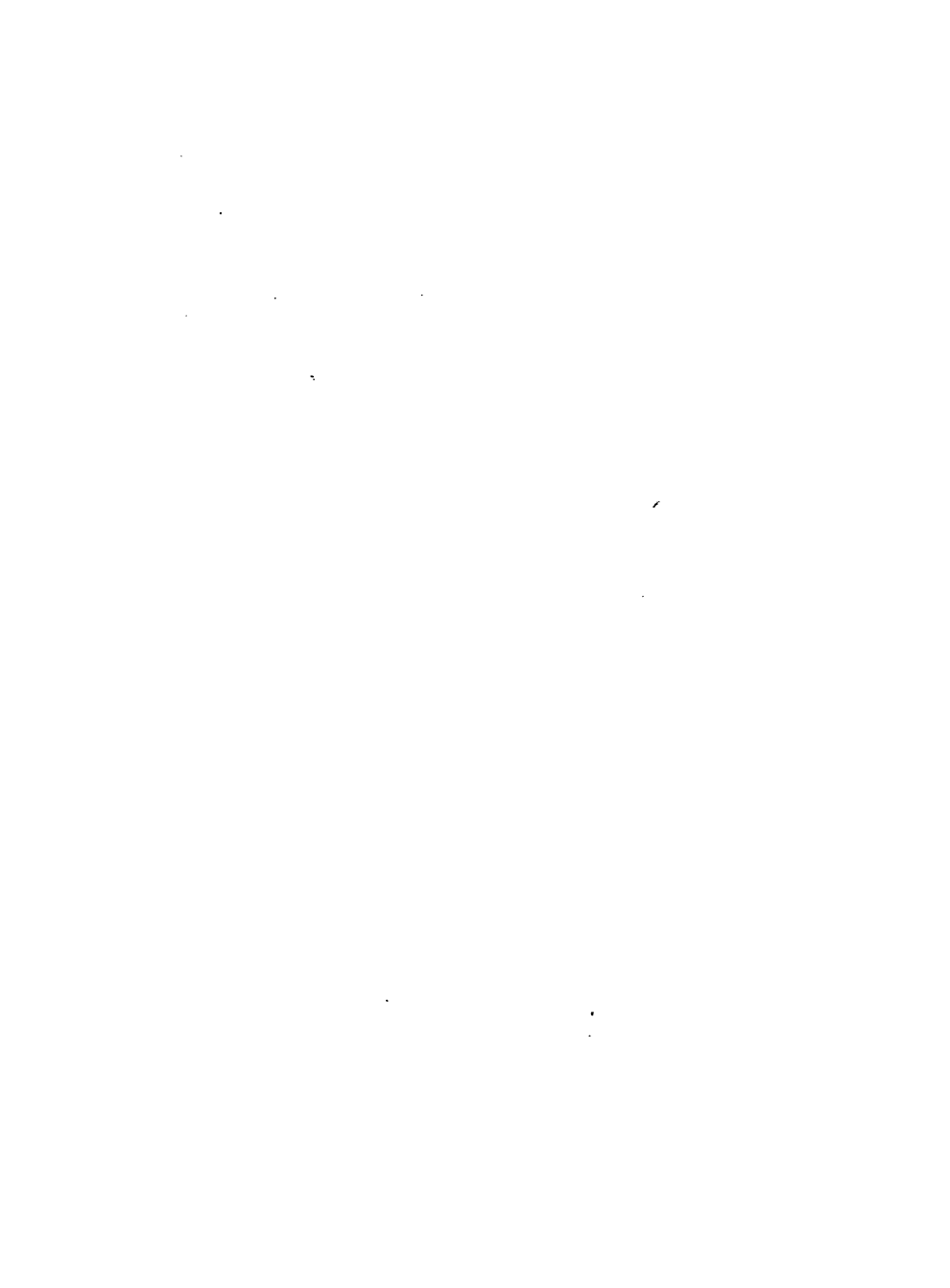
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THE  
CATHOLIC MONITOR



THE  
CATHOLIC MONITOR:

BRING

*Meditations for the Morning and Evening of every  
Day of the Month.*

SELECTED FROM THE WORK OF THE REV. J. CRAIG,  
AVON BRIDGE.

ARRANGED UNDER APPROPRIATE SUBJECTS, INCLUDING THE  
FESTIVALS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

AND

**SUITABLE FOR ALL CHRISTIANS.**

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THE  
CATHOLIC MONITOR.

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THE selection contained in this small work is taken, with one exception, entirely, and without alteration, from the larger treatise for a year, by the Rev. J. CRAIG, Avon Bridge, a pious Christian. That compilation has been out of print nearly fifty years; and this portion of it now published, has been selected with much care, and desire to make it universally acceptable, and useful *to all Christians*.

With regard to the manner of reading these Meditations, the Editor would suggest, after an experience of using them for upwards of eighteen years, both at home and in foreign countries, that they should be read regularly through morning and evening; and for those who have opportunity and inclination, two each morning and evening; to those who have not so much time,

surely one for the morning and the evening can be accomplished.

In the larger work there was no arrangement of subjects—no title to any of the readings; but in this selection, the writer trusts it may be found a great improvement to have removed these defects, so that by consulting the index of contents it will at once be seen where to find whatever may be wished to be read. Every care has been taken to arrange the readings under appropriate subjects for all classes of believers.

The Editor, well knowing the many trials to which all Christians are subjected, from bereavement, from sickness, from loss of property, and many other adversities, has inserted a large number of Meditations for any one when suffering under affliction; which he trusts may be a means, under God's blessing, to enable them to exercise a quiet and patient resignation to His will. Should any who are not suffering in like manner, think this subject is too numerously attended to, let them remember that though this may be the hour of their health and wealth, the soul's prosperity is the best prosperity.

There are also inserted appropriate Meditations for the members of that large branch of Christ's Church—The United Church of England and Ireland—suited

to the festivals observed in remembrance of the great events of our catholic faith ; and the writer ventures to say, however diverse men's minds may be, that "*all who profess and call themselves Christians*" should often meditate on these most important truths. As already said, only one, out of the sixty-two Meditations contained herein, has not been taken from the larger work : that single exception is the one upon the Holy Trinity, written by the Editor, and will be found, as mentioned, in the Index of Subjects.

The Meditations contained in this little book give concise and *plain scriptural advice* to all ranks and classes. They will be found to be an appropriate gift by parents, to their children ; by guardians, to young persons ; by masters and mistresses, to their domestics ; and as to those of riper years, it is hoped they may also derive much comfort and edification : to clergymen it will afford sixty-two subjects under well-chosen texts, as outlines for their sermons ; to all who desire to maintain a spiritual frame of mind, they will find this little work profitable reading for the Lord's day. At the end of each Meditation there is a short prayer (applicable to the subject), which, when used with a firm faith of God's mercy in Christ, will be an additional means to receive spiritual edification and strength.



The chief object in this small effort, is to show to all believing in the same most important truths, that we should hold our common faith "in the unity of the Spirit, and the bond of peace." We should remember there is but one Saviour, and one heaven for us all.

J. A. R.

EDINBURGH, 18<sup>th</sup> June 1864.

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THE  
CATHOLIC MONITOR.

# The Catholic Monitor.

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FIRST MORNING.

Also for New Year's Day.

"The time is short."—1 Cor. vii. 29.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."—Psa. xc. 12.

WHAT is *time*, compared with *eternity* ! It is but as a dream—as a tale that is told—as waters that pass away—yea, as nothing. How short and transient is the period of human life ! How soon do its years and days elapse ! The business of it, however, is vast and important. It is the season allotted me, in order to my preparation for a future—an everlasting state. Let me frequently and seriously think of the shortness and uncertainty of time. Considering how much of it is past and misimproved, let me *redeem the time*, in a faithful attention to the great duties and ends of life, in their reference to the glory of God, the honour of my Redeemer, my own salvation, and the best interests of my fellow-men. "What my hands thus find to do, let me do with all my might ; since there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, in the grave," to which I am so quickly hastening. Let me give diligence to win Christ, and to be found in Him ; and, at length, to be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless. Lord, teach me to say in truth, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain !"

**The Faithful Saying.**

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

—1 TIM. i. 15.

How delightful is this declaration!—I am a sinner; and with good reason may I acknowledge myself *the chief of sinners*. I deserved to be consigned to everlasting misery; yet the love of God, in infinite mercy, pitied my case:—He assumed the human nature, suffered and died for the salvation of sinners, to deliver them from all their guilt and depravity, and make them heirs of immortal bliss. In the gospel of His grace, He offers Himself to sinners, that "whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have everlasting life." A *saying* thus, attested by the truth of Him who cannot lie—and in all respects so necessary and suitable to me, I cordially *accept* as "all my salvation and all my desire." Upon Him, who is the great subject of it, I build all my hope and happiness for time and eternity. I am convinced that He is the alone and the all-sufficient Saviour; that His blood cleanseth from all sin—from sins of the deepest dye; and that there is virtue and efficacy in His death to pardon all my transgressions. I desire, therefore, in the exercise of a lively faith, daily to renew my *acceptance of this faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*.—Enable me, Lord, to live under the habitual impression of this truth, in a humble, believing, holy, tender, and useful conversation, to the glory of Thy name! May Thy good Spirit make it life and peace to my soul!



**The Mercies of God.**

"*They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.*"—  
LAM. iii. 23.

THE mercies of God are a sweet subject to all believers. They are sweet in their *origin*—the gracious nature of God; sweet in the *medium* through which they flow—the precious, atoning blood of Christ; and sweet in the *blessings* they bestow—extending to our complete happiness, both for time and eternity. The mercy of God is an unfailing source of the richest blessings, not only for this life, but for that which is to come. They are "new every morning." The sleep that refreshes us, the light that cheers us, the food that nourishes us, and all the comforts of life, are from God. HIM, we should acknowledge and praise in each. All the blessings of grace are likewise from Him; and the constant, renewed supplies of the Holy Spirit. All is comprehended in the fulness of the new covenant, and of Jesus Christ, from whom we receive, by faith and prayer, even grace for grace, in the most abundant, unceasing manner.

What a rich source of encouragement and comfort, to them who believe, is the faithfulness of God! Whatever occurs in the course of providence, still God is kind and faithful. His promises to His people, shall all be fulfilled in their season, which is the fittest and best. Let us glorify God, by trusting and pleading His precious promises; and expecting their fulfilment, from His power, His faithfulness, and love in Jesus. May we ever enjoy His presence, furnishing us with grace and strength to fit us for all the duties to which He may be pleased to call us!



**On the Word of God.**

‘Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.’—Psa. cxix. 11.

THE word of God is a most precious treasure. It is well fitted to make us truly rich, and holy, and happy. A child of God loves the word of his heavenly Father: he diligently peruses it; fixes its precious truths upon his memory; and seeks to have them engraven on his heart, and their influence expressed in the whole of his life. He is afraid of offending God, whom he loves above all; and he finds the word of God, its doctrines, its promises, and precepts, the only effectual preservative from sin. For this end, he “lays it up in his heart” that it may be ever ready for use, to excite him in the performance of duty, to fortify him *against temptation*, and to animate him in opposing sin, and fleeing from the appearance of it. In order to experience its virtue, however, the influences of the Holy Spirit are absolutely necessary; these, therefore, we should ever implore, that we may experience the purifying efficacy of the word of God, on the whole temper and conduct.

Let it not satisfy me that I have the word of God in my possession, or that I occasionally read it. Let it be my great concern that it may have a place, and a commanding energy, in my heart. Let it be my care diligently to meditate upon it; and let it be habitually present to my thoughts. Thus will the love and fear of God be cherished, and operate powerfully in me, to my being led to all manner of holy conversation and godliness. By the word of Thy mouth, and under the influence of Thy Spirit, sin shall become more hateful to me; holiness more lovely; and I shall make the glory of my God and Saviour, my great and governing end, in the whole of life. May I thus hide the word of God in my heart, and be preserved from sin, in thought, in word, and in deed!



**Union to Christ.**

"Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."—1 Cor. i. 30.

UNION to the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary to our enjoying an interest in Him, and in all the blessings of His salvation. Our being in Christ, or united to His person, is entirely *from God*. For this end, He gives the Holy Spirit, who, producing in the heart a lively faith in Christ, thereby unites us to Him, as the members of that mystical body of which He is the head. The free offer that is made of Christ in the gospel, for all saving purposes, is thus applied for our particular benefit. The Lord Jesus Christ becomes our *wisdom*, to enlighten, direct, and guide us, and make us wise unto salvation. He becomes our *righteousness*, for the pardon of our sins, to make our persons and services accepted with God, and to give us a title to eternal glory. He becomes our *sanctification*, to renew our natures, to render us more and more holy, in conformity to His image, and in meetness for the full enjoyment of God in the heavenly world. He becomes our *redemption*, not only to deliver us from the power of our spiritual enemies, from sin, Satan, and the world, in the present life; but, in perfectly freeing us from all evil, and rendering us perfectly holy and happy through a glorious eternity.

Let me constantly improve the Lord Jesus Christ, for all these purposes, in the whole of life, and in my views of eternity. Daily I need Him; and let me daily use Him, as my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification, and redemption, my "all in all." May I feel my dependence upon Him, and my devotedness to Him, still increasing, till the day of glory arrive, when His people shall be *ever with Him*!

**On Salvation.**

“I will wait for the God of my salvation.”—MICAH vii. 7.

SALVATION! how weighty and *important the word!* and how numerous *the blessings it comprehends!*—I am *guilty, depraved and helpless*, exposed to numerous evils and dangers; but the salvation of God extends to them all, and confers all the blessings of the new covenant. My wisdom, righteousness, strength, and comfort, are all in Him, dependent upon Him, and derived from Him, through Jesus Christ the Mediator. He bestows them in the most liberal manner, and with the richest abundance. God Himself is the salvation of His people; it wholly centres, and is enjoyed in Him, as its proper source, and the inexhaustible fountain of salvation, happiness, purity, and comfort, to all who believe in Him. Every one of them is permitted and warranted to look up to Him, as their reconciled God and Father, the God of their salvation. He who is their God, standing in a near, intimate, and endearing connection with them, is also the God of their salvation, to secure and bestow all its inestimable blessings.

It is our duty and interest still to come to God, in the exercise of faith and prayer, expecting, with earnest desire, and patient perseverance, the various blessings which we need, and which He has promised to confer. Let us thus patiently wait upon Him; persuaded that none ever seek Him, on the footing of His promise in Christ Jesus, without the richest advantage. None ever thus sought Him, and waited upon Him in vain; and let not the weakest believer imagine that *he* is to be the single exception. What should the Christian life be, but a continued waiting upon God!—May I be ever preserved from fainting despondence! May it be my constant resolution, through grace, to wait for the God of my salvation!

**On Prayer.**

"My God will hear me."—MICAH vii. 7.

A TRUE believer sets his heart upon God as the portion of his soul, in whom he shall find solid and abiding happiness. To be able to call God *ours*, is infinitely *better than to be the owner of the largest earthly possessions*, or of the whole world, though it were possible. The Christian, therefore, chooses the Lord as his; and in the faith of His new covenant grant, "I am the Lord thy God," says, "The Lord is my God." He makes choice of Him, and depends upon Him as *his* God, his portion and property in Christ Jesus.

It is the character of this God to be "the hearer of prayer." He knows the wants and the requests of His people. The prayer of the heart offered in faith, and in the name of Jesus, God graciously accepts, and will abundantly answer. What is good, He will give, in the most proper time and manner. In such prayer God delights; and for the sake of His dear Son, He will certainly bestow an answer of peace. He who sustains such a relation to them as their God, who has so often enjoined it, and who has declared that His ears are open to the cry of His suppliant people, will surely answer their requests; yea, "He will do exceeding abundantly above all they ask or think."

What powerful encouragement is this to persevere in prayer to God! Let this excite us to come boldly and frequently to the throne of grace, and to God as our God and Father in Jesus Christ, pleading with urgent perseverance for the blessings He has promised in His word. Let us never cease this profitable and pleasant exercise, till the voice of prayer is succeeded and consummated by the song of celestial praise.



**When suffering Affliction.**

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes."—Psa. cxix. 71.

ALL the people of God are brought into the school of affliction. Many useful lessons He teaches them in that school. They learn more of the value, sweetness, and suitableness of the word of God, as affording support and comfort under the pressure of affliction. They are taught to observe the hand of God in affliction, and to submit with patient resignation, as knowing from whence it comes. From sweet experience they learn more of the kindness and love of God, whose gracious presence enlightens and cheers them in the most dark and mournful seasons. Thus, by the grace of God, they acquire greater humility. At the same time, the Lord Jesus Christ becomes more precious to them; and they perceive more of His beauty and excellence. Their impressions of the reality and vast importance of eternity are rendered more deep; and, in the views of it, they are led to place a firmer dependence on the Lord Jesus,—resting on whom, they feel that they are *safe* and *happy*. They are taught to perceive more of the vanity of a present world, and to realize more of the glory and substantial blessedness of heaven. Thus do their minds become more spiritual; and their hearts are more fixed on "the things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

But, we will not learn such lessons, nor reap such fruits from affliction, without the blessing and grace of God. When the Holy Spirit attends it with His sanctifying influence, then, and then only, does it become really useful to us. Let us, then, be fervent in prayer to God, for "the supply of His Spirit," in the season of affliction. Thus shall we find reason to bless God for our troubles, and to say, "It is good for us that we have been afflicted."

**The one Mediator.**

"There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."—1 TIM. ii. v.

SIN had separated between God and us, and we were quite unable to recover ourselves into a state of peace and friendship with God. But, what men and angels could not effect, our Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished. He is the *one Mediator between God and men*; He has been called to this office; He possesses the nature of both, in His one person, God-man; He has actually satisfied the justice of God, by His obedience to the death, as our Mediator; and is still acting in this character, as our all-prevalent intercessor. Through Him, *and by no other*, have we access to God; but by Him we have abundant access. He has purchased every blessing, and in His right, we are warranted to claim each of them, according to the promise of God, and our own necessities.

The Lord Jesus Christ is a wise, a powerful, a zealous, a faithful, and successful Mediator, who has the glory of God, and the salvation of His people, deeply at heart. By Him, sinners of mankind are introduced to God with full acceptance; and He prevails with God on their behalf. How great His love to sinners, to undertake their cause, and manage it with God! How safely and confidently may we come to God, and present our requests in His name! In Him, believers of every nation are united, and are all equally welcome to the only true God, through the one Mediator Jesus Christ. Let our prayers and thanksgivings, both for ourselves and others, still ascend to God through Him. Let us still maintain a constant dependence on God, through this one Mediator, in the exercise of deep humility, cordial gratitude, and universal obedience. Let this be our habitual and steady aim, that God in all things may be glorified by Jesus Christ, and under the influence of His Spirit.

**On God's Word.**

"Thy testimonies also *are* my delight, *and* my counsellors."—  
PSA. cxix. 24.

THE word of God contains these precious truths, which, while they tend to the glory of God, are well calculated to promote our true advantage, and our highest comfort. Bearing the stamp of *His* authority, who is truth itself, as well as infinite in wisdom and in love, we may safely rest on the word of God, and enjoy the sweetest peace and comfort, in the persuasion that all its promises shall be fulfilled. The people of God feel a delight in the word of God, which surpasses every other. Their hearts turn to it, as their sure and sweet resource in every time of need. The bitterness of outward trouble often renders God's testimonies more pleasant to them. They are taught to live upon them more entirely as their comfort. Not only do Christians delight in the word of God, they also take direction from it. They consult it, in order to be guided in the whole of life, and led in the paths of truth and duty. *The counsels of the wisest men they regard no further*, than as they correspond to *the word of God*, and are derived from it. They go to the word of God and read it with diligence and prayer, that they may obtain true wisdom and increase in it. The Bible, in reference to Him, whose book it is, is the Christian's ORACLE. He does not question or dispute, but submits to its decisions. He desires to have his whole heart and life, by the grace and Spirit of Christ, completely moulded after its image, and according to its dictates.—*May this be my happy experience!* May the word of God be daily becoming more pleasant and profitable to me! And may my whole temper and conduct be fashioned according to it! May the Scriptures be "the men of my counsel" in every case; and may I walk with God in close conformity to them!

**Desires after Divine Strength.**

"My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word."—Psa. cxix. 25.

OWING to the remainders of corruption in the best of saints, while in a present life, their hearts are too apt to cling to present and sensible objects. This is their burden and their grief; they lament it before God, and plead with Him for recovering and quickening grace. They are impressed with the vanity and emptiness of all created enjoyments; and at the same time, they perceive the excellence and glory of those which are spiritual and eternal. Something of the sweetness of them they have tasted; and they earnestly desire to experience more. It is painful to them, when their souls, instead of feeling spiritual desires, and rising heaven-ward, grovel upon the earth, and anxiously pursue its perishing enjoyments.

They know, and are deeply sensible, that God alone, by His quickening word and Spirit, can revive their souls, and fix them on Himself, and the things above;—earnestly, therefore, do they apply to God, through Jesus Christ, that He would restore their souls, and invigorate their graces, when at any time decayed. *The word of truth and grace is the grand means, by which quickening influence is administered:* and in His word He has promised to revive, to strengthen, and comfort His people. On His word, therefore, they fix their faith and hope, as the means by which He quickens their souls; and as affording them a sufficient plea for expecting, and praying for it. Let this be our exercise, under spiritual languor or decay. Let us not be easy or at rest under it; but, confessing it with sorrow before God, let us plead for the renewed, increased, and animating influences of His Spirit. Thus shall our souls be revived and elevated; and we shall pursue our Christian and heavenly course, with growing ardour and delight.

**For Sunday—the Lord's Day.**

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.”—Rev. i. 10.

THE Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week, is to be observed in honourable memorial of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. On that day He rose, clearly showing that the purchase of our redemption was completed. He rose as a public person, and the quickening Head of the Church; the pattern and pledge of the resurrection of all His members. It is the day which He has distinguished in a special manner, for His worship and service. He, to whom we owe every moment of time, claims this as *His peculiar property*. Resting from all the works that are not required by necessity or charity, we should devote it wholly to religious and holy purposes.

We are *in the Spirit* on this day, in an ordinary manner, when, under His influence, the graces He has implanted are in lively and vigorous exercise—when we have fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and when we enter with pleasure into the various duties of the Sabbath, whether public, private, or secret. The prosperity and comfort of religion in our own souls, and our usefulness to others, depend much, under the blessing of God, upon a careful, a strict, and conscientious attendance to the duties of this holy day; from obedience and love to HIM, whose it is. Let us not reckon it a burden, but a pleasure and delight, and even the best of days.—That we may sanctify this day, and observe it in a proper manner, let us earnestly implore the influences of the Holy Spirit. Thus will our Sabbath on earth prove an earnest of the heavenly and eternal Sabbath; and our preparation for it, by the grace of God, will be abundantly promoted.





**Justification by Faith.**

“ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—ROM. v. 1.

SIN produces a dreadful separation between God and His creatures; and “all” the children of men “have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” To recover them to God, the interposition of no less a mediator than the Lord Jesus Christ, was absolutely necessary. By the holiness of His human nature, the obedience He yielded in His life to all the precepts of the law, and the satisfaction He gave by His sufferings and death, He wrought out a perfect righteousness, the sufficiency of which has been proved by His resurrection from the dead.

Thus has our Lord Jesus Christ answered every demand of the violated law, that sinners of our race might be pardoned and accepted, justified before God, not only in consistency with the law of God, but to its highest honour. Receiving the righteousness of Christ by faith, as exhibited in the gospel, their iniquities are all forgiven, and they are admitted into the everlasting favour of God. In the exercise of faith, we receive the Lord Jesus Christ and His perfect righteousness; and being thereby united to His person, we are justified in and through Him. So *faith* is the grand *means* of our being *justified* before God, and on this account we are said to be justified by it.

In this state, we have *peace* and friendship *with God*, enjoy a sweet peace in our own souls, and our hearts are united to all believers in Christ. We are admitted into a pleasing and profitable fellowship and intercourse with Him, as our God and Father in Christ, our friend, our portion and all. May this be my happiness in life and death, and through all eternity, to have peace with God through Christ; and may I daily improve it in faith and prayer, lively hope, and holy obedience, to the glory of God, under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

**For Whitsunday.**

"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."—JOHN xvi. 7.

WHAT is disagreeable to their present feelings, is often expedient and necessary for the people of God. They should, therefore, cheerfully commit themselves to the care and conduct of Him who is infinite in wisdom and in love. It was very painful to the disciples of Christ, to think that HE should leave them; but it was expedient and necessary for the Church, that He should leave this world, and go to heaven, as to His bodily presence. *Till then*, the Holy Spirit, the Author of all grace and consolation in the hearts of men, was not to be granted in His more abundant influences. He was to plead the cause of Christ, in the most effectual manner, both in the world and in the heart. The whole interest of Christ, and the whole success of His cause, depend upon the gracious and powerful agency of the Holy Spirit. The comfort of the people of God, their support in every trouble, their holiness, their assistance in every duty, and their meetness for the heavenly glory, all depend on the influence of the promised Spirit of Christ, the divine Comforter.

How great a blessing, then, is the Spirit of Christ, in His presence with *the Church*—His agency and influence on the heart! Let me constantly expect and look for Him, in the exercise of faith and prayer. May the exalted Saviour dispense Him to me, to the Church, and to the world, according to the design of His exaltation, and His gracious and faithful promise! Thus shall we rejoice in the exaltation of Christ, and daily improve it to the honour of the Redeemer, our own comfort and holiness, and the benefit of the Church, and of the world at large.



**For Good Friday—the Crucifixion.**

“Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.”—1 COR. xv. 3.

WE had sinned against God, and were justly exposed to everlasting misery. But, on our behalf, the Son of God mercifully interposed. In the council of peace, He undertook for us, engaged to bear our sins, and to make atonement for them. At the appointed and the proper season, He assumed our nature into personal union with His divine; and, as the substitute and surety of His chosen people, actually bore their sins. By His voluntary obedience to death, even the death of the cross, He fully satisfied the justice of God, in their name and stead; and brought in an everlasting righteousness. He *died* that we might live, and suffered this painful, ignominious, and accursed death, that we, who deserved to perish, might obtain everlasting salvation.—That the Messiah, the *Christ*, the anointed of God, should be thus “cut off for us”—“that His hands and feet should be pierced”—our “iniquities laid upon Him”—and “reconciliation made for iniquity;” all these things had been plainly predicted, and are fully accomplished.

How great the love of Christ in thus dying for perishing sinners like us! How firmly should we trust in Him for the pardon of sin, deliverance from its power and pollution, for its complete destruction, and our entire freedom from it! His death shall certainly accomplish its great and beneficent designs. Let me firmly trust in the Lord Jesus, presented in the gospel, for a special interest in all the benefits of His death and purchase. May I daily live upon Him by faith, for remission of sins, peace with God, the sanctifying Spirit, and eternal life! And may His love constrain me to live to His glory, in obedience to His will, after His example, and according to His holy designs.

**The Burial of Christ.**

"And that he was buried . . . according to the Scriptures."—

1 COR. xv. 4.

THE *burial* of Christ followed very quickly after His death. In ordering the circumstances of it, God manifested His power and wisdom. When the grave of Christ was designed to be with the wicked and the vilest malefactors, *Joseph of Arimathea*, a rich man, was stirred up, in the providence of God, to furnish Him with his own new tomb. Thus, too, ancient prophecy, respecting the death and the grave of Messiah, was fulfilled; and His continuing a part of three days in the grave, answered the type of *Jonah*, who was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale. This, as it was a part of His humiliation, likewise evinced the reality of His death, and the certainty of His resurrection. That His body did not continue longer in the grave, nor corrupt in it, afforded not only a proof that He was the Son of God, His Holy One, but likewise that His death was fully satisfactory to the justice of God, having answered all the demands of His law, as the substitute and surety of sinners. During His lying in the grave, His disciples had an opportunity of showing their faith in Him, and their affection to Him, in that dark and sorrowful season. The grave is thus no longer a prison, or a place of dread confinement, to them who believe in Jesus. By His lying in the grave, it is sanctified and sweetened to them. It is a bed of rest, in which their bodies repose in union to Jesus, till He shall awake them at the morning of the resurrection. May I often think of the grave of Christ, that my faith may be confirmed, and my holiness promoted, by His grace and Spirit! May I remember that I have been *buried* with Him by baptism into death, to the end that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so I also should walk in newness of life.

**Easter Sunday—The Resurrection of Jesus.**

"And that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."  
1 COR. xv. 4.

It had been plainly foretold in Scripture, that *Christ*, after being put to death, should *rise again*; should be taken from prison and from judgment; and that, as the Head of the Church, He should revive and live the third day. He Himself had frequently spoken of this to His disciples. *This great event* was attested by angels at the sepulchre of our Lord; by His followers, who saw Him distinctly and repeatedly after His resurrection. One of them was permitted to feel His wounded hand and side; and by no less than five hundred was He seen at one time. Even the unsuccessful attempts of His enemies to conceal it, tended greatly to its confirmation. They acted against the clearest light of evidence and truth. In the face of the greatest opposition, His disciples attested the resurrection of Christ. This they would never have done, had they not been firmly persuaded of the reality and importance of this great event. The effects of the Spirit's influence, promised and bestowed by the Lord Jesus Christ, clearly attests that the Saviour is risen indeed.

Surely, then, the Lord Jesus is the true Messiah, the supreme God, and has made a complete atonement for sin. In virtue of His resurrection, all His members are made spiritually alive, and shall be raised up in glory at the great day. He is risen as the Head of the Church, and the first-fruits of them that sleep. May I ever depend on this crucified and risen Saviour *for pardon and peace*, for righteousness and life. In the faith of Christ, may I possess the hope of glory, and be encouraged and animated *in bearing every trouble*, and performing every duty, even to the end! As He died and rose again, may I die to sin, and live to holiness, and in life everlasting!

**On a Renewed Heart.**

"A new heart also will I give you."—EZEK. xxxvi. 26.

As the heart of man is by nature deeply corrupted, so none but God Himself, possessed as He is of almighty power and boundless grace, can produce a renewing change upon it. This is absolutely necessary in order to fit us for all holy duty, and for the enjoyment of a holy God, both here and hereafter. This gracious change is effected by the Holy Spirit uniting us to the person of Christ, applying His precious atoning blood to our souls, and thereby "creating us anew in Him." While the same *faculties* are continued, a gracious change is produced on the *qualities* of them. The dark mind is enlightened; the obstinate will is subdued to the authority and grace of God; the defiled and unfaithful conscience is purged, enlightened, and regulated by the word of God. The carnal affections are now purified, raised above the things of time and sense, and set upon God, and Christ, and the things above. The change is complete in all the parts of the soul, but not perfect as to any; it is gradually advancing, however, and shall still advance, till all the remainders of sin shall be exchanged for the unspotted purity of heaven, and its "fulness of joy." The new heart, freely bestowed by the God of all grace, is *given*, never to be resumed,—it is the first-fruits, and the sure earnest of glory.

May I possess this precious *gift*, and a leading blessing in the new covenant! May the growing evidence of it, in its reality, excellence, and holy beauties, be more apparent in my whole temper and conduct! Under the influence of the Spirit, and in the improvement of the word of truth, may I thus be growing in conformity to the image of God, and meetness for heaven! Whatever *I want in a present world, may I not want the new heart!* Having this, I am truly rich, and must be happy.

**The Love of God.**

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!"—1 JOHN iii. 1.

How great the dignity, honour, and happiness of being the sons of God! He has taken many of the sinners of our guilty race from the family of Satan, and of a present world; and, by adopting and regenerating grace, has brought them into His own family. They are now *called* His children; and, in calling them His children, He *makes them so*. In consequence of their union to the Lord Jesus Christ, and in virtue of it, believers are constituted the children of God, invested with the noblest privileges, made "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." Their sins are pardoned; they are clothed with the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, their elder brother; they are under His special protection; He provides for them in all respects; He instructs them, and gives them wholesome correction. Angels are appointed to minister to them as "the heirs of salvation." Heaven is prepared for them as their eternal home; and the Spirit of their heavenly Father dwells in them as "the Spirit of adoption," under whose influence they "cry, Abba, Father," and maintain a delightful intercourse with God as their Father in Jesus Christ.

How great, how distinguishing, how sovereign and free, the love of God to sinners of our race, in thus making them His children, and dealing with them as such! The vileness of their natural character, and the abundant mercy He bestows upon them, demonstrate the riches of His love and grace passing all our comprehension. May I be a happy partaker of this love! May it ever fill *me* with admiration! May I ever live under the sweet and lively impression of it, and under its influence, in all holy obedience!

**On Improving our Time.**

“Redeeming the time.”—COL. iv. 5.

How much of our time has been already lost! Much of it is lost in the season and vanity of childhood and youth. Much of it is wasted in unnecessary sleep, in sloth and idleness. It should be our concern to *redeem* it, and not squander this precious commodity in the service of sin, of Satan, and a present evil world. Let us reflect on the past, and seriously inquire what improvement we have made of it, whether we have employed it for the glory of God, our own best interest, and that of our fellow-men. Has our principal care been directed to “the one thing needful,” the “good part, which shall never be taken from us?” Let us studiously improve the present for obtaining a saving acquaintance with God in Christ, as revealed in His word, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit. In whatever time of life we are, youth or middle age, or in old age,—in whatever circumstances, in health or sickness, in prosperity or adversity,—let us redeem the time, viewing God in all the dispensations of His providence, and seeking the spiritual improvement of all means for our progress in holiness, and preparation for heaven. The Sabbath and all divine ordinances should be improved with care, in the faith of Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, in the view of that “rest which remains for the people of God” in heaven. All our work should be properly arranged, and prosecuted with the utmost diligence. Our time is short, it is uncertain, and is swiftly passing into a vast eternity, where our state, for everlasting happiness or misery, shall be irreversibly fixed. Time, when past, can never be recalled; and therefore we should now, by the grace of God, *redeem* it by a faithful, active, unremitting improvement of it, for the glory of God through Jesus Christ, and for all holy and useful purposes.



**On Repentance.**

"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor *myself*; and repent in dust and in ashes.—JOB xlii. 5, 6.

TRUE repentance is a gift of the Spirit of God, a fruit of His saving operations on the heart. In producing it, He enlightens the mind in the knowledge of God. His glory is now perceived in a more clear, distinct, powerful, and effectual manner, than ever it was before. Something of God might be already known in a more general way; but now the eye of the mind is opened and enlightened to discern the divine glory with more practical influence. Now it is that we are deeply humbled before God,—we are led to see that we have sinned against Him, not only in our lives, but by the corruption and depravity of our hearts. The greatness and holiness, the justice, and especially the grace and mercy of God, as manifested in Jesus Christ, clearly show the evil and danger of sin, and the absolute necessity of pardon, through a sufficient atoning sacrifice, while the discoveries of mercy in the divine character encourage a humble, believing, penitential return to God. The native consequence of all is, that we are led to prostrate ourselves before God in the lowest abasement. Elevated views of the majesty and grace of God, and of His special mercy towards us in Jesus, tend to lay us thus low before God, as utterly mean and vile in His sight.

How suitable is such a frame and disposition as this to sinful creatures in the presence of the great God, whom they have so greatly offended! For this end we should seek to know God more clearly and intimately as revealed in His word, and under the influence of the enlightening, regenerating Spirit. When He is poured out upon us, then shall we look to a pierced Saviour, and "mourn for Him as for an only son, and a first-born." May the Spirit of grace and supplication be granted to me for this end, more and more!

### The Day of Judgment.

“For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”—2 COR. v. 10.

THE great concern of real Christians is, to have their persons and services accepted of God—to be approved of *Him*, by whom our eternal state shall be irreversibly fixed. The period when this decision shall finally and fully take effect, is the last judgment. Our own consciences, the present afflictions of the godly, and the prosperity of the wicked, and, above all, the testimony of God in His word, assure us, that there shall be a general judgment. Our Lord Jesus Christ is appointed to be the judge. To Him, as mediator, all judgment is committed; and from Him, at His glorious appearing to judge the world, shall the last, the eternal judgment of devils and men proceed.

Immediately upon the resurrection of the dead, *all* the children of men *must appear before the exalted Judge*. According to their real character, they shall be placed on the right or left hand of the throne of judgment. As men are found in Christ, justified and sanctified, and bringing forth the fruits of holiness; or under the curse of the law, and unrenewed and unholy—so shall be their place, their sentence and allotment. The former, in the rich mercy of God in Christ, shall be accepted, approved, and crowned, and the glory conferred upon them shall bear a gracious proportion to the measure of grace and holiness they have attained; while the latter shall be doomed and driven to everlasting misery, as the just punishment of their sins, and suited to the degree of their guilt.—What a solemn and weighty decision! May I, through grace, be prepared for this event, and be daily looking forward in the expectation and improvement of it! May I live as one who must shortly be tried by the Judge of all—clothed with His righteousness—renewed into His image—and continuing *faithfully* in His word and work!

**The Love of Christ.**

"For the love of Christ constraineth us."—2 COR. v. 14.

THE love of Christ is the grand principle by which believers are animated and influenced to all holy obedience. It is a love which "*passeth knowledge*." Like Christ Himself, it is from everlasting. From eternity, He looked on perishing sinners with a heart of the tenderest love and pity. He has proved the reality and the greatness of His love, in the amazing fruits of it. Viewing us as under the sentence of the law spiritually dead, and exposed to eternal death, He assumed our humble nature, was "made in the likeness of sinful flesh," obeyed the precept of the law, and endured its heavy penalty, in His voluntary, His grievous sufferings, His ignominious, bloody, and accursed death. All this He did and endured, that His people might be delivered from death, from the curse of the law, denouncing *eternal* death on account of sin—from *spiritual* death, by the almighty power of His quickening Spirit—from the sting of *natural* death, and at last from its power and effect, in a glorious resurrection. How great, how free, how glorious the love of Christ!

What is the effect of this love on *them* who have been made partakers of its benefits, and been made "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord?" It sweetly, powerfully, and irresistibly disposes them no more to live to themselves, to make their own will, or honour, or pleasure their end—but to live to a crucified and risen Saviour. They desire to be wholly directed, guided, governed, and disposed of by Him, whom they love above all—to be wholly conformed to His image and pattern—and entirely subject to Him as their Master and Lord. May this, by His grace and Spirit, be my great, my sole ambition, and thus be prepared for the full and everlasting fruition of Him in heaven!

**When suffering Affliction.**

"This *is* my comfort in my affliction; for thy word hath quickened me."—PSA. cxix. 50.

ALL the people of God have experienced the benefit of His *word*. By means of it, as the word of life, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they have been *quickened*, and made "alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." When they are averse to duty, or inactive while engaged in it, they are animated and invigorated in the performance of it.

At the same time, the word of God proves to them a source of *comfort*, in the season of affliction. They meet with a great variety of afflictions; but still, they find suitable comfort in the precious truths and promises of Scripture. From thence they learn the gracious, reconciled character of God, by whom every affliction is sent. From thence they learn His merciful design in their afflictions, to wean their hearts from the world—to draw them to Himself—and to make them "partakers of His holiness." They are assured of His powerful and supporting grace; and that eternal glory, the purchase of their Redeemer's blood, and for which He is rendering them meet, shall be the happy issue of all their present troubles. In reading the word of God, and meditating upon it, and in conversing about its precious truths, their hearts are comforted, and the bitterness of their troubles allayed. According to the promise of His word, God is with them in trouble, and His presence is light in darkness, and comfort in the midst of sorrow. Coming to God, and pouring out their hearts and sorrows before Him, they experience a sweet, a solid, and satisfying peace.—May I know, from experience, the comforting, quickening, sanctifying, supporting influence of the word of God! May I daily live, in the improvement of it, for all the purposes of this precious revelation of truth and grace.

**When in any Trouble.**

"It is I; Be not afraid."—MARK vi. 50.

In the providence of God, His people are sometimes brought into very severe troubles, by which, they are ready to apprehend, they shall be overwhelmed. In the midst of their troubles, and sometimes when these are just come to the greatest height—when nothing but utter ruin seems presented to their minds, then does the Lord Jesus manifest Himself to them. In the most seasonable and gracious manner, does He appear on their behalf; He dispels their anxiety and alarm; and commands the storms and tempests of threatening trouble into a perfect calm.

HE is infinite in *wisdom*, to overrule and order all their troubles for their good, and to make them contribute to their more abundant comfort, and their increase in holiness. He is Almighty in *power*, to deliver and save, and to give peace and quietness to their hearts. He is *faithful*, and will not suffer His word of promise to fail. He will be with them in trouble—to support, to sanctify, to comfort and bless, and to give them a happy issue from all, to His own glory, and their best, their eternal advantage. His *love* is unbounded and unfailing; He "loves" them "to the end," and nothing shall ever separate them from it. All the waves of trouble shall not quench nor diminish it, but cause it to shine more brightly than ever. In His love and pity He will deliver them from all evil, and bring them to His eternal glory, to undisturbed, and everlasting peace and happiness.—May the Lord Jesus Christ, thus powerfully, sweetly, and seasonably, manifest Himself to me; and may I be enabled to realize His presence, to the comfort, the quietness, and establishment of my heart, in every season of trouble, in life and death, in order to my full, undisturbed, and never-ending enjoyment of Him in heaven.

### On the Atonement.

“The blood of Jesus Christ, *God's* Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin.”

—1 JOHN i. 7.

THE great foundation of that holy fellowship which believers enjoy with God, is the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. By His obedience and sufferings in our nature, completed in the shedding of His blood on the cross, He has fully satisfied the justice of God, for the sins of His people. Being the eternal *Son of God*, His blood, His atonement, and righteousness had an infinite value and efficacy, to purge us from our sins. He is likewise the Saviour, *anointed* of God, appointed and consecrated to this great work. His blood is *precious*, being the blood of so glorious a person, the Son of God, in our nature, the great Mediator between God and man; and the High Priest of our profession. It is precious too, in its effects, particularly as it cleanses from sin, not from *one*, but from *all* sin. It cleanses from the *guilt* of sin, from its *pollution*, and will at last cleanse from the very *being* of sin, all who experience its powerful efficacy. It is that purifying fountain, in which, whosoever washes shall be made clean. It never loses, but still retains its purifying virtue. For this end, that it may cleanse from sin, it was shed on Calvary, is exhibited in the gospel, and is sprinkled by the Holy Spirit on the soul and conscience of a sinner, in His reception and application of it by faith. When the sinner is enabled cordially to believe in Jesus Christ, and in the powerful, atoning, purifying virtue of His blood, then does he experience its efficacy, in being cleansed from all his sins. May I thus experience the efficacy of a Redeemer's blood! Delivered from the guilt of sin, and having its power subdued, and its pollution removed, may it be weakened more and more, and its polluting influence gradually purged, till at last it cease to exist in the world of glory.

**Before going to the Communion.**

“This do in remembrance of me.”—LUKE xxii. 19.

As the ancient passover was instituted for a memorial of the deliverance of Israel from their bondage in *Egypt*; so, the Lord's Supper has been appointed by Christ, to commemorate the far greater redemption He has accomplished for His people, by the sacrifice of Himself. The friends of Christ are called to eat bread, and to drink wine, at His table, as a *memorial* of His body broken, and His blood shed for their sins. In this ordinance, they should remember His original and essential glory, as “God over all, blessed for ever;” His incarnation, His deep humiliation, His obedience, sufferings, and death. They should remember the honour to which He is now exalted, at the right hand of God; managing their interest, pleading their cause, teaching and governing His Church, and, as about to come at the great day, to perfect the everlasting salvation of His people.

In all these views, we should remember Christ at His table; with knowledge, with faith, with love, humility, thankfulness, penitence, and holy joy; and, at the same time, with fixed resolutions, in the strength of grace, to be more devoted to Him, more faithful, more bold, ardent, and cheerful in His service. In waiting on this ordinance, we should act in obedience to the command, and have a supreme regard to the honour of Christ, as our crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour. In connection with this, we should seek our own *spiritual advantage*, in dying to sin, and living to righteousness; and thus, too, we should express our union and fellowship with Christ, and all true believers His mystical body.—May I be enabled thus to observe and improve the ordinance of the Supper! May I be found an acceptable guest, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, renewed by His Spirit, and having all *Christian graces* in lively and suitable exercise!

**When in any Trouble.**

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it."—

PSA. xxxix. 9.

THIS text expresses the temper of a child of God, humbled and softened by His grace, under the afflictive dispensations of His providence. A saint is not insensible to his afflictions: he feels the smart of them, else there would be no room for patience and resignation under them. He desires and prays for deliverance, and uses the means which God has appointed for that purpose, depending upon His blessing to render them effectual. But, it is the exercise of a saint, to observe and acknowledge the hand of God in afflictive visitations: he looks above instruments and second causes, to God the First Cause, and the Prime Agent in all events. Instead of fretting or repining, he *quietly submits* to the afflicting hand of God. He kisses the rod; and while the tear of sorrow moistens his eye, it is lifted up with meekness and resignation to his heavenly Father.

The Christian knows and feels, that all he is, and possesses, belongs to God; and that HE has a sovereign right to do what He will with His own. He is impressed with His wisdom, His goodness, and faithfulness. In the whole conduct of God towards His people, He acts wisely; and is performing His promises to them. Their severest afflictions are the discipline of a Father, by which He is promoting their best interest, and making them partakers of His holiness, and more "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." How reasonable, then, is an entire submission to His good and holy will, in all dispensations, however afflictive! May this be my temper and spirit, under the afflictions which I meet with! May I bear all with patient and meek submission to the will of God, as my God and Father in Christ, saying, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good!"



**On Death.**

"I die daily."—1 COR. xv. 31.

THAT all men must die, is a truth frequently declared in the word of God, and abundantly confirmed by observation; but it is the concern and study of the real Christian to be *dying daily*. He lives under the habitual impression of the certainty of death, and as not knowing how soon it may come. Through grace he is daily willing to die; and in the view of death, he is daily living by the faith of the Son of God, and committing himself to the power, grace, and faithfulness of his Redeemer. He is daily preparing for death, in looking by faith to a crucified and risen Saviour, *avoiding sin*, maintaining fellowship with God through Jesus Christ; and having his views directed to "the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." The Christian waits for his great change in faith, hope, patience, and resignation.

Great is the advantage of such an exercise. It tends to promote the glory of God, and to adorn our Christian profession. The Christian is thus enabled to live above the world, to walk closely with God, and to meet with death, not as an enemy or a curse, but in Christ Jesus a real and a valuable blessing. This shows the worth of true Christianity, and exhibits the Christian character in a truly favourable and engaging light. We are thus taught to improve time, to esteem Jesus more, and to be familiar in our thoughts with death, judgment, and an eternal world. May I thus die daily! May death be habitually in my view as connected with Jesus Christ! And may I live as one who knows not how soon he may be called to die, "looking at the things which are not seen, and which are eternal!"



**When Suffering from Losses.**

"Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word."—Psa. cxix. 65.

THIS acknowledgment every child of God has good reason, and, through grace, will be disposed to make. In whatever way God has dealt with him, and with whatever afflictions he has been visited, still God has acted wisely and *well*. All His dispensations are ordered and directed so as to promote His own glory, and the good of His people. He is not a Master who deals hardly with any of His servants. He acts towards them in a kind, a tender, and faithful manner. Upon the review they are made to say, with wonder and gratitude, "He hath done all things well." Often they do not see the reasons of His conduct at present, but they shall see them afterwards; and then shall they perceive, and cheerfully acknowledge, that He has "dealt well" with them. Not one of His people is forgotten or neglected, nor does any event befall them but under His wise and kind direction.

God deals with His people *according to His word*, agreeably to His promise, and in fulfilment of it. They are made to see, that, in every event which befalls them, and in the whole dispensation of grace and providence towards them, God is fulfilling His own word. Carefully to observe, and devoutly to acknowledge the propriety of the whole divine conduct towards them, affords pleasing entertainment to the saints, and is matter of delightful intercourse at the throne of grace. May this be my daily exercise, to observe and own the wisdom, faithfulness, equity, and love, which marks the divine procedure towards me! For this end may I live near to God, study His word, and converse much with Him by prayer! And may I be prepared for heaven, where the conduct of God towards His servants shall be seen and admired in the fullest extent.

**On Regeneration.**

"Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new."—2 COR. v. 17.

How great is the change which a sinner experiences when he becomes a member of Christ, and is vitally united to His person by faith of divine operation ! A *new creation* takes place upon him. This, like the first creation, is a work wholly of divine power, effected by means of the word, and in which a spiritual light introduces the other parts of this great work. This change extends to the whole man. Though the same faculties remain, new qualities are formed. The understanding is enlightened, the will subdued, and brought into conformity to the will of God. The affections are turned from earth, from vanity and sin, to God and Christ, and holiness and heaven. There are new views, new desires, dispositions, labours, and pursuits. The man who experiences this change, feels new pleasures, new joys and sorrows. His whole course and manner of life takes a new direction. Now he loves God, and hates sin above all other objects—loves the people of God, because they are partakers of this change, and are animated by the same spirit, the same principles and motives. Now he makes the law of God his rule, and aims to have his whole heart, his thoughts, his words and actions, conformed to it. He makes the glory of God in Christ his supreme and governing end, and in the enjoyment of Him he seeks his happiness. The grand object of his hope is not to be found in a present world, but in heaven and a future glory, which he expects, and to which he aspires in the faith of Jesus, who is "in him the hope of glory." This change is abiding, and shall be perfected in that blessed state, where "that which is in part shall be done away." May I possess and exhibit the reality of this change, and may its *influence* pervade the whole of my conduct, to the praise and glory of God !

**Upon our Birthday.**

"Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments."—Psa. cxix. 78.

FROM God we *at first* received our being, with all the conveniences, comforts, and supports of it. The frame of our bodies, and our reasonable immortal souls, clearly evince the wisdom, the power, and goodness of God. We are "fearfully and wonderfully made." As formed after the image of God, we were fitted to promote His glory, to serve and enjoy Him. But by sin we have lost the holy image of God, and are unfit for answering the great end of our being. In obtaining the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, however, we are fitted for honouring, serving, and enjoying the God of our life. None but He who made us at first can renovate our souls, making us "new creatures in Christ Jesus."

In producing this great and gracious work, God gives to men an enlightened understanding. Thus they perceive the beauty and glory of divine truths, and are made to feel their power. They are disposed and enabled to keep God's commandments. Knowing and learning them, they love them; and loving them, they cheerfully and universally obey them. None but they who are *taught of God* learn His commandments. All else are ignorant of the truths of God, as to the light, sweetness, and influence of them. But when God is pleased to grant His gracious and holy teaching, He writes His law upon the heart; and thereby fits for uniform, universal, and persevering obedience.—May this be my happy and growing yearly experience! May He that *made me at first* make me anew for Himself, that I may show forth His praise, and glorify Him by all manner of holy obedience! May I thus live to His glory through Jesus Christ, manifest the power of His grace, be "devoted to His fear," and attain my full and proper happiness, in the enjoyment of Him as my *new-covenant God* and Father in Christ!

**When Suffering from Affliction.**

"I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou, in faithfulness, hast afflicted me."—Psa. cxix. 75.

As God is infinitely righteous and holy in Himself, so all His dispensations are perfectly just and equitable. This truth the saints have been taught, by the word and Spirit of God, and know it experimentally and practically. However mysterious some parts of the divine conduct may be, they feel, and cheerfully acknowledge, that their severest afflictions are *right*, and far less than they deserve. Knowing what God is, in the light of His word, and as taught by the Spirit, and knowing their own character as sinners, they own, with deep humility, that God is just and righteous when He corrects them. It is a striking evidence of the justice and purity of God, when He will not suffer sin, even in His own dearest people, to pass without due and salutary chastisement.

But in the *afflictions of His people*, He manifests that He is also *faithful*. He is therein performing His own promise, "visiting their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes." Their afflictions are the wholesome discipline of the new covenant, in administering which, God is acting a wise, a kind, and faithful part. He is thereby making His children "partakers of His holiness," and chastening them "for their profit." What reason then have the people of God to be humble, submissive, and even thankful, in the season of affliction!—*May I be enabled to bear and improve affliction*, in the spirit of a child of God, a member of Christ, and an heir of glory! May I view and suffer it, as proceeding from the hand of a righteous and holy, and yet a merciful and faithful God, my God and Father in Jesus Christ! And may my light affliction, which is but for a moment, work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

**Before going to the Communion.**

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."—1 COR. xi. 26.

THE bread and wine, in the *Lord's Supper*, represent His *body* and *blood*, or Christ Himself, as clothed with our nature, making atonement for our sins, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness for our justification and salvation. These elements being set apart from a common to a holy use, by prayer and thanksgiving, represent the appointment of Christ by His Father, and His voluntary undertaking to be the Mediator between God and man. Our receiving them, our eating the bread and drinking the wine, signify our reception of Christ by faith, as exhibited in this ordinance; and our partaking of Him by faith, as a crucified Saviour, to be our spiritual provision for the sustenance and nourishment of our soul.

In this holy exercise, we "show forth the death" of Christ. We declare the *reality* of it; the *severity* of it, in the breaking of His body, and the shedding of His blood; the *efficacy* and *sufficiency* of it as an atonement for sin, fully honouring the justice of God, in pardoning the sins of all who receive Him by faith. We show it forth *to God*, as that which satisfies His justice; to our *own conscience*, as that which frees it from an accusing sense of sin, and purges it from its guilt and pollution; *to Satan*, as that which quenches his fiery darts, answers his challenges, and enables us to triumph over him; *to the world*, as that in which we glory, and which is the reason of our holy separation from it, in profession and practice. We show it forth in all these views, as that on which we depend for the performance of all the promises of *the new covenant*, to our complete and everlasting salvation, and of which this ordinance is a seal.—May it prove such, in my experience, by the grace of Christ!

**On Prayer.**

"O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."—Psa.  
lxv. 2.

It is the character and the distinguished honour of God, to be *the Hearer of prayer*. He is well acquainted with the various wants and necessities of His people. But He requires them to "make known their requests to Him by prayer." He accepts the prayers, which are offered in faith, under the influence of the Holy Spirit; and bestows a suitable and gracious answer. God evidently shows that this is His character, since He has opened up a way of access to Himself, through Jesus Christ. He hears prayer with the utmost readiness; allows and warrants His people to use the greatest importunity in prayer; and bestows the richest blessings, in the most liberal manner. He gives pardon and peace, grace and glory, yea, He "gives the Holy Spirit," in answer to the prayer of faith, offered in the name of Jesus. If He gives not the blessing which is asked, He gives what is better in its place; and though He *defers* the answer, He never *denies* it: and sometimes He gives more than what is asked. The reason is, that God is infinite in mercy. He is a faithful God. Christ has purchased every blessing; and ever makes intercession, on the ground of His finished work, His atonement and righteousness.

What encouragement does this present, to come unto God! All are invited to *come to Him* through Jesus Christ; and none who come to Him, in the appointed way, by faith in Christ, shall be rejected. May I be enabled to enjoy and maintain fellowship with God, by humble, constant, believing, fervent, and persevering prayer! May I be daily and habitually exercised in prayer to God through Jesus Christ, pouring out my heart and requests before Him!



**Easter Sunday—The Resurrection of Christ.**

“Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel.”—2 TIM. ii. 8.

THE *resurrection of Christ* forms a most important article of Christian faith. Had He not been raised from the dead, our “faith would have been vain,” and we could have had no security for the pardon of sin, or any spiritual blessing. But we have the fullest evidence of this fact, from the testimony of angels—of His own disciples—and even from enemies, in their abortive attempts to prevent or conceal it. The consequences of this event, in the effusion of the Holy Spirit, and the glorious success of the gospel of a crucified and risen Saviour, also afford a striking proof that the Lord Jesus is “risen indeed.”

A frequent, habitual *remembrance* of this great event, is, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, of important practical use, in the experience of Christians. It tends to confirm and strengthen their *faith* in Christ, and in the truths of His word. It is *comfortable* to them, under all the afflictions of life, to remember that Christ is risen and glorified; since HE lives, who is their head and treasure. Their *hope* of a future glory is thereby invigorated, since Christ is risen as “the first fruits of them who sleep.” Thus, too, their *holiness* is promoted, in deriving the influences of the Holy Spirit from Christ the risen Saviour. In Him their souls are quickened to all duty, and animated in the Christian warfare.—May I thus remember that Jesus is risen, for all the practical purposes of faith and hope, comfort and holiness! May I remember, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so I also should walk in newness of life! May this be my constant and vigorous exercise, in the whole of life; and at the hour of death suitably to remember this great truth of the gospel, that Jesus Christ, God in our nature, was raised from the dead!



**Before going to the Communion.**

"But, let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup."—1 COR. xi. 28.

SELF-EXAMINATION is a duty in which all Christians should frequently engage. Each one should engage in it for himself, with the utmost seriousness, as in the sight of God, and shortly to be tried before His dread tribunal. This is the duty of Christians, particularly in the prospect of observing the solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper. In this ordinance, we profess our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and our relation to Him as His members, united to Him as their living and common head. The most intimate fellowship is to be enjoyed in it, with a crucified Saviour, and with all His people. We should *examine* ourselves particularly, as to our *knowledge* of the nature and design of this institution, to commemorate our Lord Jesus Christ, and to show forth His death. We should examine our own *character*, whether we be indeed the friends of Christ, who truly believe in Him, cordially love Him, and yield thankful, universal obedience to Him. We should inquire into the *frame* of our souls; whether sin be the object of our entire and growing hatred; and we, long-ing after more enlarged fellowship with Christ, and greater conformity to Him. Having thus tried ourselves by the word of God, and in dependence on the light, teaching, and guidance of His Holy Spirit, and found that we are such as He invites, we should come to the table of Christ. We are to eat bread and drink wine, as the appointed symbols of His broken body and shed blood, His perfect sacrifice in our name and nature. Thus we express our faith in Him, our love and devotedness to Him, as our only Saviour and Lord. Thus our souls are to be nourished, and all the graces of the Spirit promoted within us, as the earnest of glory.

**When Suffering from Sickness.**

"Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; *that* I may know how frail I am."—Psa. xxxix. 4.

DEATH is certainly the *end of all men as to a present world*. The union of soul and body is dissolved; we are separated from all the enjoyments of time, all its business, connections, and cares; and enter upon a vast eternity. To them who die without an interest in Christ, and in a state of sin, it is an end of all their present pleasures, and all their vain hopes; and all the offers and means of grace, have, to them, for ever ceased. They are fixed in a state of everlasting and inexpressible misery, under the wrath of God, and in the place of woe. To the godly, to all them who have believed in Jesus, death puts an end to all their troubles, to all sin and sorrow; they are made perfectly holy and happy, as to their souls, in the presence and enjoyment of their God and Redeemer, in the hope of a glorious resurrection, to their bodies, at the great day.

That death is the end of all men as to a present world, and their entrance upon an eternal and unchangeable state of happiness or of misery—is a truth of the greatest importance, and the fullest evidence. We are dying creatures, and every moment tending to the grave. This, however, is seriously considered and applied by few; nor are we naturally disposed to lay it to heart. We should *pray to God, that He would cause us to know our end*—not in the particular circumstances of it, but its general and practical interest. May I, duly affected with the certainty and nearness of death, look to Jesus, the mighty and merciful Saviour; and thus obtain deliverance from the sting of death—triumph over it in the faith and hope of the gospel—and meet it, whenever it comes, in the peaceful, joyful expectation of eternal glory, by Jesus Christ!



**For Trinity Sunday.**

“ And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”—2 THESS. iii. 5.

HERE, in these words, we have the three persons of the Holy Trinity brought before us by this prayer of an inspired apostle, namely, God the Holy Ghost, to direct our hearts into the love of God our Father, and into the patient waiting and resting on God our Saviour, Christ the Lord. It well becomes *all* Christians to meditate on the spiritual blessings here prayed for: 1st, That their hearts might be brought into the love of God. To this we can never attain, unless God, in His infinite grace and mercy, direct our hearts by the Lord the Holy Spirit. Our hearts are ever apt to go after *other things*; it is our sin and misery whenever we place our affections upon wrong objects; but if God our Father direct our love aright upon Himself, the rest of the affections will be rectified.

2d, That a patient waiting for Christ might be joined with this love of God. There is no love of God without faith in Jesus Christ, but by true faith in Him we have access to God the Father, by the Holy Spirit. We should anxiously pray and desire to know the great doctrine of this day, that we may be inclined and enabled so to live, that the Lord the Spirit may direct our hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ. Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy upon us!



**The Love of God.**

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—JOHN iii. 16.

IN what an amazing manner has God displayed His love towards our guilty world! We had sinned against Him, and deserved His hottest displeasure. But He has taken occasion from the sin and misery of man, to manifest the greatness of His love. He did not merely speak words of compassion and pity; He did not only spare or relieve. No! He gave His eternal, His equal, His dear and only begotten Son; He gave Him to assume our nature who had sinned; to obey that law which we had violated; and as our Surety and Sacrifice, to endure its heavy penalty, by His "obedience to death, even the death of the cross." He gave Him to deliver us from all our guilt, depravity, and misery; and to put us in possession of spiritual and everlasting life. The objects of His love and gracious purpose, are delivered from the greatest evils, and put in possession of the highest happiness; *evils* extending not merely to *time*, but to an *endless duration*; and a *happiness* reaching to the *same vast and incalculable extent*. The method in which this deliverance and happiness are granted, is the most kind and merciful. "*Whosoever believes*" in the Son of God, as the only Saviour of lost sinners—confiding in Him, for His whole salvation, as fully and freely offered in the gospel; every sinner, however vile and wretched, who thus believes in Jesus, is made a partaker of His great, His glorious and everlasting salvation. May the Holy Spirit shed abroad this amazing, unspeakable love of God in Christ in my heart! May I ever feel it with lively gratitude, and live under the comfortable and sanctifying impressions of this love, in the whole of life! May it be my song in the season of affliction, at the hour of death, and through all the ages of a happy eternity!

### The Unsatisfying Nature of Worldly Things.

"I have seen an end of all perfection; *but as for thy commandment, it is exceeding broad.*"—PSA. cxix. 96.

THE most excellent worldly objects and enjoyments are all fading and unsatisfying in their nature. They cannot be a sufficient portion for the soul of man. In their *extent*, they do not reach to its vast capacity and boundless desires. In their *duration*, they are measured by time, whereas the soul of man is immortal. "All the glory of man is as the flower of the grass." They who have made a diligent, impartial, and careful search, have found it to be so; and all the saints are powerfully and practically persuaded that this is indeed the case.

But the *commandment*, the word of God, is *exceeding broad*, vast in its extent, and everlasting in its continuance. Its precepts reach to the inmost thoughts, the very temper and disposition of the soul; its promises reach to every case, *however afflictive*, in which a child of God can be placed. There is a fulness in them reaching to all our wants and desires. The happiness presented and to be enjoyed in the word of God is unfading. "The word of the Lord endureth for ever;" and the blessedness connected with it, and resulting from it, is eternal, and never fades. An extensive, a permanent, an enduring, an immortal happiness, is to be found in the word of God, in its precious truths and promises, as all standing in the most intimate relation with Jesus Christ, and with God in Him.—May I be more and more persuaded of the vanity and emptiness of everything beneath the sun! May I seek and find, in God through Jesus Christ, and in His word of truth and grace, the abiding satisfaction and solace of my heart! Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, may it prove the life, the strength, the peace and joy of my heart, for ever and ever!

### On Regeneration.

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—JOHN iii. 5.

THIS is the solemn and express declaration of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Prophet of the Church. A great, an universal, and abiding change must be produced upon us, as an effect of divine Almighty power, in order to our becoming the genuine, living members of the Church of God on earth, and our being admitted into His heavenly kingdom. *The Holy Spirit*, the third person of the glorious Trinity, bestowed by the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator, is the great, the voluntary agent in producing this blessed change. The word of truth, especially the gospel, is the appointed means employed in enlightening and sanctifying the souls of men. *The water* used in *baptism* represents and seals it, though it does not necessarily accompany the dispensations of this ordinance.

This change is *vital, inward, and decisive* in its character. The blind eye is opened, the hard heart is softened, and the affections, formerly set on the world, on vanity, and sin, are now turned to God, to Christ, to holiness, and heaven. The views, the choice, the pursuits of one thus renewed, become holy and spiritual according to the will and word of God. None of the other blessings of the gospel-kingdom can be properly understood, nor really enjoyed, without this renovating change; and without it we could not relish the enjoyments or exercises of heaven; nor shall any one, continuing destitute of it, be received into the mansions of bliss and glory.—May I be a happy partaker of regenerating grace; and may this good work, begun in my soul, be progressively advanced by all means, under the influence of the Spirit, till it be perfected in the full vision and enjoyment of God in Christ, without one spot of sin, in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy!

**On the Word of God.**

"How sweet are thy words unto my taste, *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth."—Psa. cxix. 103.

ALL the saints of God are distinguished by their high regard to the *word* of God. They are impressed with its infinite, unspeakable value, far surpassing all the riches and treasures of a present world. The Holy Spirit has also communicated to their minds a spiritual taste or savour, by which they relish the word of truth as pleasant or agreeable to them. They experience a holy and heavenly sweetness in it, affording the noblest entertainment to them. *Honey* may give a transient pleasure to the bodily palate; but the word of God gives an *abiding satisfaction* to the soul; and one which shall continue with it for ever. It is connected with the supreme love of God, is sanctifying in its tendency, and promotes the lively exercise of all gracious and holy tempers.

This spiritual relish is experienced by every one of the saints of God for himself. They discern something in the word of God peculiar to itself, and there is no part of it but is agreeable to them. This leads them to a diligent perusal of the word of God, with earnest prayer to God for the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. Enjoying the pleasures of this spiritual taste, their hearts are weaned from the gratifications of time and sense, and more fixed on the "pleasures which are on God's right hand," in the heavenly world, in the greatest abundance, and ever new. This sweet experience is a source of the richest consolation, in the absence of all worldly comforts, and under the greatest troubles. May it be my happiness to taste more of the sweetness, and to feel more of the power of the word of God! May this word be "the rejoicing of my heart," my life, my strength, and hope at all times, and in every case, under the influence, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit!

### On Preaching.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."—1 THESS. v. 21.

WHILE we should not despise, but cordially esteem the preaching of the word, we should beware of receiving *anything declared by man*, with an implicit faith. We should *prove* and try it by the law and testimony, by the infallible word of God. We must search the Scriptures, and thus discover whether or not it be true, and accordingly receive or reject it. In making this inquiry, however, we should not "lean to our own understandings," but trust entirely to the light and guidance of the word and Spirit of God. Thus we must "try the spirits," the doctrines and practices which are preached or taught. The word of God is the unerring standard to which we must uniformly bring them, and abide by its decision.

But we must not always continue *hesitating* and *unsettled*; having proved what is declared to us to be agreeable to the word, and founded upon it, we must *hold it fast*. Persuaded that it is true and good, we must continue in it, steadfast in the faith, and in the uniform practice of all holy duty. To whatever temptations, persecution, or opposition we are exposed, we must thus "hold fast that which is good," rejecting whatever is contrary to it. Our proving all things must be in order to our discerning and holding fast that which is good, in the exercise of faith and love, with firm resolution, and in dependence on the grace of God in Christ.—May I possess and exercise, under the influence of the Spirit, that holy discernment by which I may clearly distinguish between truth and error, sin and duty; and in the perception of what is good, may I constantly abide by it, and continue in the lively and fruitful practice of it, to the glory of God, and to the honour of my Christian profession!



**For Good Friday—The Crucifixion.**

“Sing, O ye heavens ; for the Lord hath done it : shout, ye lower parts of the earth ; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein : for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.”—Isa. xlv. 23.

THE *Redemption of the Church*, by the death of Christ, God’s Son, in our nature, is a truly glorious work. In applying the purchase of the Redeemer, by His Holy Spirit, we are delivered from the greatest evils, and made partakers of the richest blessings, of grace and glory, and everything truly good. The glory of all divine perfections is brightly displayed in this amazing work. Wisdom, and justice, truth, holiness, love, and power, are all manifested in the sweetest harmony. God is glorified ; and guilty, enslaved sinners are pardoned, and saved, and set free. The whole glory of our redemption belongs to *Jehovah*, its great author, by whom it was planned and is executed.

This is a most fit and proper subject of *grateful, admiring, and adoring praise*. All the heavenly hosts, and all the inhabitants of this lower world, whether as societies or individuals, are called to unite in this song of praise to a redeeming, three-one *Jehovah*. This song should flow from lively gratitude and holy joy ; and all, in their several places, and according to their various circumstances, should join in it. In due time, and by means of the universal spread, and extensive, powerful efficacy of the glad tidings of redemption, the voice of praise shall be heard throughout all the earth ; and in heaven it shall resound from angels and the redeemed, through all the ages of a vast eternity. —May I be among the number who have learned, who love, and who sing the song of praise to a redeeming God ; and whose heart and life correspond to it, and are influenced by it ! May this be my daily and pleasing exercise here, in the church below, in order to my performing it, in the best and fullest manner, among the *nations of the saved* in the heavenly world !

### Dependence on Christ.

“And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by Him.”—COL. iii. 17.

In all that the Christian does, in his whole temper, converse, and conduct, he should have a fixed, habitual regard to the Lord Jesus Christ. All his thoughts, words, and actions should be regulated by the will, the authority, and the command of Christ. To furnish us for every duty, we should depend on Him for grace and strength; and in all, we should have an eye to His glory, as the great and governing end. Upon His merit and mediation we should constantly depend for acceptance of all holy duties, and for the forgiveness of what is amiss. All that is good in us, or done by us, must proceed from Him, and through Him alone can it find acceptance with God.

While we do all, whether in word or deed, *in the name of Jesus*, we should still “give thanks to God, even the Father, through Him.” In the midst of all other duties, we should never forget to give thanks; “giving thanks always in all things.” Our praises, as well as our prayers, and all holy services, should be presented to God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Mediator. Doing all things in the name of Jesus, we shall never want proper and abundant matter of thanksgiving and praise to God, even the Father. Let us give thanks to God for His unspeakable gift, the Son of His love; and for all other mercies in connection with Him, the chief mercy. Thus we should ever feel and act, as wholly dependent upon God through Jesus Christ, for every blessing we receive, and for all that is truly good in thought, word, or deed.—May this be my constant exercise, to do all in the name of Jesus, giving thanks to God even the Father by Him, under the influence and agency of the Holy Spirit! May all my views, feelings, and conduct be thus truly, and in the most extensive sense, CHRISTIAN!

**On the Ascension of our Lord.**

"Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for the rebellious also*, that the Lord God might dwell *among them*."—Psa. lxxviii. 18.

WHEN our Lord Jesus Christ had finished the work which His Father gave Him to do on earth, He *ascended on high*. This was a fulfilment of ancient prophecy. *In our nature*, and in the character of our Mediator, Jesus ascended in a public and solemn manner to the highest heavens, to His Father's immediate presence, the world of glory. Thither He has gone, and there He is enthroned as the King and Head of the Church. He has fully proved that His righteousness is perfect, while He is preparing the mansions of rest for the reception of His followers. He has gone to plead the cause, to maintain and promote the interests of His people, and to secure their eternal happiness. Our enemies, sin, Satan, and a present evil world, He vanquished on the cross; and in His ascension, *He led them captive*. In virtue of His conquest, all His people are made "more than conquerors" over them, and obtain the crown of victory. The ascension of our Lord has likewise been signalized by His *receiving gifts*, and *bestowing them on His Church*. He received the Holy Ghost above measure, and dispenses Him to men in the richest abundance. He bestows Him on sinful men, the most rebellious and wicked, that a gracious and reconciled God, a God in covenant, may dwell among them. Thus do they become an habitation of God through the Spirit, and worship a redeeming God, in a spiritual and acceptable manner, through Jesus Christ the Mediator.—May the ascended Saviour make me a sharer of His glorious victory over all my spiritual enemies! and may He bestow upon me the Holy Spirit, in His most abundant influences, and extend this blessing more and more to the Church and to the world!

**When Suffering Affliction by Bereavement.**

"He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."—

HEB. xiii. 5.

THE people of God must lay their account with manifold afflictions in a present life. Uncertainty and change are marked on all earthly enjoyments. But in God, as their new-covenant God and Father in *Christ Jesus, they have an unchanging Friend*, an everlasting Portion. His presence is sufficient to cheer, support, and comfort the hearts of His people, under all the wants and bereavements of a present life. Having God with them as their God, they have all things, and can want for nothing that is truly good. Having Him for the strength of their heart, and their everlasting portion, they have good reason to trust and not to be afraid. This is a sufficient solace to their minds under all the troubles of life; and is sufficient to bear them up in the prospect of death; for He will never leave them, nor forsake them, but will be *with them*, and they with HIM for ever.

Christians may be well assured of this, from the *unchanging faithfulness* of God. He has declared in the most express and solemn manner, that "*He never will leave nor forsake*" His people. He is in HIMSELF, the immutable God; His *love* and *purpose* are still the same. He has given them His Spirit to dwell in them for ever; and His Son, whom He heareth always, ever lives, and shall never cease to make intercession for them. With the utmost safety, we may depend on God for His gracious presence; and that all His perfections in Christ Jesus are engaged, and shall still be exercised on their behalf.—May this promise be the support and strength of my heart at all times, and in every case! May I ever realize and plead it in lively faith, in earnest, persevering prayer! And may I be enabled still to live near to God, in humble, believing dependence, and in all holy obedience!

**Christmas, or the Nativity.**

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."—JOHN viii. 56.

HAVING heard the promise of Messiah, as "the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head," Abraham longed with ardent desire to see *His day*—the season in which He should actually appear. This was indeed a *day* to the Church—a *day* of light, of warmth, and fruitfulness to the souls of men. He revealed the true character of God—the way of pardon and acceptance with Him—of sanctification by His Spirit—and of eternal life. How glad and cheering the discoveries He has made by His word, and the blessings He has purchased by His obedience to death, in the human nature! Abraham did not live to see this day, in its actual appearance, but he enjoyed a discovery of it by faith. He *saw* an eminent type of Christ in *Melchizedec*, and another in the slaying of the ram instead of *Isaac*. And He was promised to him, as the seed who should descend from him, and in whom "all the nations of the earth were to be blessed." The reality, excellence, and glory of this day were discerned *by faith*; though the object was at a distance, faith brought it nigh. Thus penetrating is the eye of faith, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and looking through the glass of divine promises. *What reason, then, have we to rejoice that Christ has actually appeared,* "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and "brought life and immortality to light by the gospel!"—May it be my exercise to look back with faith and thankfulness to the appearance of Christ in the flesh for our salvation, and His ascension to glory; and to look forward with believing, humble, joyful expectation, to the season, "when He shall appear the second time without sin," to the complete "salvation" of His people, in their eternal glory by Him!

### The Merciful Promise.

"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."—HEB. viii. 12.

IN His covenant of grace, God promises the *forgiveness of sin*; a most necessary and precious blessing. It consists in the removal of the guilt of sin, taking away our obligation to punishment, on account of sin. It flows from His own free, and rich, and sovereign mercy, through the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. God forgives for His name's sake, as a God in Christ, glorified in the righteousness of His dear Son. On this account, He is just, while He pardons and justifies ungodly sinners who believe in Jesus. The pardon which God bestows, is full—it extends to all unrighteousness, to all our sins and iniquities, however numerous or aggravated. When He pardons sin, none of His people's sins are excepted, in the gracious and full remission which God bestows through Jesus Christ, whose "blood cleanseth from all sin," from original and actual sin, and from all sin without the slightest exception.

When God pardons sin, He pardons it so as *never to remember it*, or to call those whom He has pardoned to account for it. He will never recall nor revoke His pardon; when He forgives sin, he also forgets it, or treats those whom He pardons as if He had forgotten it. The forgiveness of sin is connected with all other spiritual blessings. That which prevented our enjoyment of other mercies, is removed, and the stream of mercy flows in the richest abundance through our Lord Jesus Christ. This forgiveness is the effect of that mercy which is from everlasting, and is the earnest of that mercy which shall be to everlasting.—May I be a partaker of this pardon, and live in the faith and improvement of it every day to the end of life, as a partaker of all the blessings of that covenant which is "ordered in all things and sure."

**On United Prayer.**

“Brethren, pray for us.”—1 THESS. v. 25.

ALL real Christians, whatever be their office in the Church, whether ministers or people, are brethren. They are all brethren in Christ; they belong to the same family, of which God Himself is the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ the elder Brother, and the Holy Spirit the uniting Bond. They are all connected by the same Spirit, which dwells in Him as the Head, and in all believers as the members of His mystical body. Under the influence of this Spirit, they all love one another, “for the truth’s sake which is in them,” and for the sake of Christ, whose image they bear, and in whose steps they walk. They should all own each other as brethren; and, as an expression of mutual, endeared regard, they should *pray for one another*. Whenever they come to the throne of grace, they should remember all their fellow-Christians as brethren, and supplicate blessings on their behalf from the God of all grace. Ministers need, and *should ask, the prayers of their people*. They need the constant supply of the Spirit of Christ, to furnish them more and more for their work, to encourage their hearts, and to strengthen their hands in the service of Christ. Christians should pray for an increase of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit to their ministers; and that their labours may be blessed to the conversion of sinners, and the edification of them who believe.

The more that people thus pray for their ministers, it is to be expected that ministers shall receive the more from God, and that a greater blessing shall attend their ministry. The ministry being blessed of God, shall thus be a greater blessing to precious, immortal souls.—May the Spirit of grace and supplication be poured out on ministers and people, that they may strive together in prayer for each other!

### On Baptism.

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.”—GAL. iii. 27.

It is the happy privilege of all real Christians, to be united to the Lord Jesus Christ. HE is the Head of that mystical body, of which all true believers are the living members. Christian baptism *is the sign and seal of this union*. In this ordinance, the privilege of Christians, as the living members of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all its blessed consequences, is represented and confirmed: and, in this view, the believer in Jesus is called to use it. They who have thus been *baptized into Christ*, are possessed of that union, of which baptism is the sign and seal. Such persons have *put on Christ*. They have put on Christ for righteousness, to deliver and secure them from the guilt of sin, and to make them accepted with God. They have put Him on, too, for sanctification, to renew and purify their hearts, and to fit them for all manner of holiness. Being *in Christ*, HE is also in *them*; and at the same time, HE is on them for all the purposes of their complete salvation.

They who are thus in Christ, baptized into Him, and blessed in Him with all spiritual blessings, are bound to make a constant improvement of Him; depending on His righteousness as their sole plea for every blessing, and on the influences of His grace and Spirit to render them more and more holy, and meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. At the same time, they are bound to live in devotedness to Him, to live to Him as their Lord and Master. In conformity to Him, into whom they have been baptized, and whom they have put on, they are bound to die unto sin, and to walk in newness of life.—May it be my happy attainment to realize more of this great privilege, to live more in the faith, and under the influence of it, as a member and partaker of the Lord Jesus Christ!



**The many Devices of Men.**

"*There are many devices in a man's heart ; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.*"—PROV. xix. 21.

THE *heart of man* is full of a variety of schemes and projects, for accomplishing his own ends. But though he may hide them from others, and keep them close in his own bosom, they are well known to God. They may be formed without a regard to Him, or even in opposition to Him ; but He overrules them all in the course of His providence, for answering His own great designs. Men are wavering in their devices, and apt to change from one to another, which they may think more proper. Their schemes are often absurd and unjust ; but the counsels of God are wise and holy, steady and uniform.

The *devices* of men, however they may be formed, and with whatever art contrived, cannot defeat the purpose of God. "The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." The measures of men are often defeated by the counsel of God ; but *none of them can*, in the least, *change His counsel*, or alter His proceedings in the course of His providence. "He is in one mind, and none can turn Him ;" and all He does is according to the unalterable purpose He has formed. The most crafty and subtle devices of men, by which they think to impose on those around them, God can easily and speedily overturn. He who sits in heaven, laughs at the schemes which men form against Himself, and against His Christ ; and causes them, in His infinite wisdom, to subserve His own great purposes, which are all fulfilled. How comfortable is this to the people of God, that all His purposes which are, every one, right and good, and in Jesus, kind and faithful, shall be accomplished in due season !—May all the plans I form, be under the direction of infinite wisdom, and in humble submission to the will and purpose of God in Christ Jesus !

**After the Communion.**

“O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.”—

PSA. xvi. 2.

THE solemn transactions into which we have entered with God, *should not be forgotten*. We should frequently recollect them, that we may *more fully enter into their spirit, and comply* with their design. When a saint of God says to the Lord, “Thou art my Lord,” he expresses faith in Him as his God in covenant. Having believed in the Lord as his, on the footing of the grant which is made of Him, he thus speaks out the solemn act. He has “believed, and therefore he speaks.” This, too, is his *decided choice*. He has chosen the Lord, as his Lord, the full, satisfying, all-sufficient portion of his soul. He has devoted himself to the Lord, as His property, to be only, entirely, and for ever His. He has given up himself to the Lord, to be disposed of, and governed according to His will. This, the true believer is not ashamed openly to profess and declare before the world; but it is his concern, to have it more and more deeply impressed on his own heart, that he has thus said, and explicitly engaged, that Jehovah shall be his Lord.

If we thus engage and speak aright, it must be *from the heart*, from an inward and gracious principle under the influence of the Holy Spirit. In their secret converse with God, the saints must often remind themselves, and charge upon their souls, that they have thus said. It should be their study to live under the impression of this solemn engagement. For this end, we should seek the continued and needed supplies of the Spirit of Christ, that He would thus incline, and fix, and determine our hearts.—May I never forget this, but be ever mindful of it; that I have “said unto the Lord,” a God in Christ, that He is *my Lord!* May this be my real, habitual exercise!

**On Winter.**

“Thou hast made—winter.”—Psa. lxxiv. 17.

It is our duty to observe the agency of God, and the operation of His hand *in all His works*. While this is to be observed especially in our redemption by Jesus Christ, it should be observed also in the various works of providence; and not only so, but in the ordinary course of nature, *and in the revolutions of the seasons*. These succeed one another in a beautiful and happy order, under the direction and according to the promise of God in His word. One of these seasons is *winter*; it is also *made* and ordered *by God*. The various appearances of this season, its storms and tempests, its cold and frost, its snow and overflowing rains, are the work of God, and obey His high command. All these He makes to serve His own wise purposes. By means of them, the air is frequently purified, and the ground is prepared for the labours of the husbandman, and for producing its proper fruits.

In improving this season, we should admire and adore the agency of God, in everything respecting it. We should be thankful for the various advantages we enjoy during this season, beyond many others, both in respect of outward comfort, and for the improvement of our minds, especially for Jesus Christ, His gospel, and the Scriptures of truth. All these, we should, in dependence on the grace of the Spirit of God, diligently improve. We should also pity, and as far as we have it in our power, relieve and succour those who enjoy not the same advantages, or may be in distress.—May I be enabled to make a due improvement of this season! May I learn to trust in a redeeming, new-covenant God, during the darkest season of trouble; and wait upon Him for the returns and manifestations of His love and favour, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit!

### After the Communion.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."—GAL. vi. 15.

IN order to constitute us real Christians, truly regenerate persons, it is not sufficient that we *observe the ordinances*, or *enjoy the privileges* of the visible Church. In this respect, "all are not Israel who are of Israel." We may thus "have a name to live, while in reality we are dead," and have not the life of God in our souls. Persons may be correct in their outward conduct, and may even have vanishing impressions under the word, and hear it for a season with joy—and yet not be new creatures. There may be also a show of mortification and self-denial, and of great zeal for some peculiar views in religion, while we want a vital principle, the saving grace of God.

The new creation is a great moral change, effected on the heart by the Holy Spirit, in a free and sovereign manner, and by means of the word. This change extends to all the powers of the soul. The understanding is enlightened, the will is renewed, and the affections are purified and elevated; while the conscience, purged in the blood of Christ, becomes soft and tender, and is regulated by the word of God. The reality of this change is manifested by the fruits of holiness in the whole life, and a diligent care to live to the glory of God, to please and serve Him by all manner of new and holy obedience, flowing from faith in Christ, and love to Him. This change is imperfect as to degrees in the present life, but is still advancing and improving by means of the word and Spirit of God, till it is gloriously perfected in the heavenly world, in full conformity to the image of God in Christ.—May I be thus a new creature in Christ Jesus! May I daily live more and more to God; and at last be made perfectly like to Christ, in knowledge, holiness, and bliss, seeing Him as He is.

### The Barren and Unprofitable Professor.

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."—MATT. iii. 10.

THEY who enjoy *the means of grace* in purity and plenty are in a situation of the last importance, and which calls for the most diligent, watchful, and faithful *improvement*. They are as trees planted in a good and fruitful soil, well cultivated, prepared, and watered. It is reasonably to be expected that such persons should bring forth good fruit; that they should produce the fruits of the Spirit, in all goodness, righteousness, and truth; that they should be filled with these fruits, which are, by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

But if they who enjoy such advantages continue *in a course of sin*, unbelieving, impenitent, and unholy, they are exposed to the greatest danger. Being found barren and unprofitable, they are condemned to be cut off in the righteous vengeance of God. They who continue under the means of grace, without any spiritual improvement, are often *speedily punished*. They are frequently consigned to *signal* and total ruin, on account of their contempt and neglect of Christ and His gospel, and wilful continuance in unbelief and sin. The axe of righteous judgment is ready to cut them down; *and however high they may rise in honours* and gifts, continuing *barren and unfruitful* in true holiness, they are certainly and awfully punished, with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.—May I be possessed not only of the form, but of the power of godliness! May I possess, not merely the gifts, but the saving graces of the Holy Spirit; and, under the means of grace, bring forth the fruits of righteousness in all holy conversation and godliness, "to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved!"

### On Salvation.

“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”—

ACTS xvi. 31.

THE inquiry of every sinner awakened to a sense of his sin and danger is, “What shall I do to be saved?” He sees himself undone and ruined by sin, and is earnestly desirous to be informed of the way of deliverance. The Lord Jesus Christ is presented in the gospel as the only and the all-sufficient Saviour. In order to our enjoying an interest in Him, and becoming partakers of His salvation, we are commanded to *believe* in Him. We must give our assent to the truth and testimony of God concerning Christ; we must be persuaded of the free and full offer that is made of Christ in the gospel, as our only, and, at the same time, a sufficient warrant, to depend on Him for salvation. We must acquiesce in the method of salvation by Jesus Christ, and approve of it cordially, in all its parts. There must also be a *particular* and personal reliance on the Lord Jesus for *our own salvation*.

In this way is the sinner united to the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, and savingly interested in Him. He is delivered from all evil, from the guilt, the power, the pollution, and consequences of sin; he is put in possession of all spiritual blessings here, and of eternal glory hereafter; he is fully justified through the righteousness of Christ; he is sanctified and preserved by the Spirit of Christ, and at last made perfectly holy and happy in the immediate presence, the full enjoyment of a three-one God in Christ, and entire conformity to the image of Christ.—May I be a partaker of this precious faith of divine operation, and live by the faith of the Son of God, depending on Him for every needful blessing, till I be admitted to see and enjoy Him perfectly in heaven!



### The Barren and Unprofitable Professor.

"As for such as turn aside after their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: *but peace shall be upon Israel.*"—Psa. cxxv. 5.

WHILE they who are "upright in heart," truly sanctified by the Holy Spirit, shall persevere in the ways of holiness to the end, they who have *only the profession*, without the inward power of godliness, frequently *turn aside* into the ways of sin. They seemed to have departed from them, but their hearts were still attached to them; and it is not surprising to find them again returning to the *crooked paths of iniquity*. But if, after they seemed to know the way of righteousness, they turn from it, their guilt is peculiarly aggravated, and their doom shall correspond. "The Lord shall lead forth such with the workers of iniquity, and shall banish them for ever from His presence." They shall be *led forth* with other *workers of iniquity*, and shall go away into everlasting punishment, aggravated by the guilt of their apostasy and departure from God, and from the way of truth and holiness in which they seemed to walk. Their way is perverted, and their end is misery and ruin.

But happy is the case of the true, spiritual *Israel* of God, who choose the way of truth and holiness, and walk in it. By the grace of God, they continue in faith, and prayer, and holy obedience. *Peace*, all true happiness, is upon and with them in their way, and they have peace in their latter end. They have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and a sweet inward peace, of which they can never be deprived; and they enter into everlasting, undisturbed peace, and a fulness of joy in the heavenly world.—May I be kept; from the way of error and sin which leads to death and be found among the true, spiritual *Israel* of God, upon whom there is peace and mercy; and who are kept and guided in the way of truth and holiness, till *they are brought to glory!*

### The Assurance of a True Believer.

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

—PHIL. I. 6.

IN his natural state, the soul of man is in disorder and ruin. It is covered with darkness, depravity, and pollution. There is nothing truly good in the human heart, by nature. But, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, *a good work* of renewing grace has been produced in all *true believers*. The mind has been enlightened; the will has been sweetly subdued to the will of God; the affections have been purified and elevated; and the conscience, purged by the blood and Spirit of Christ, is directed by the word of God. A work of new-creating grace has been produced; but it has not arrived to its perfection, nor will perfection be attained in the present state. For this, however, believers look and wait; and they shall not be disappointed. At *the day of Christ* they shall be crowned, not only with perfect holiness, but with the highest felicity and glory.

We have the *best of reason* for *concluding*, that this good work shall be preserved, and at last gloriously perfected. He who has *begun*, is able to *perform* it. "He is faithful who hath promised" to do this; and "nothing shall ever separate His people from His love." The Lord Jesus still intercedes for them within the vail, that they may be preserved; and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, ever dwells in them for this purpose. A three-one God is engaged; and His honour is pledged for the complete salvation of all who were given to Christ, and who believe in Him. All the blessings He has purchased, not only in grace, but in glory, shall be bestowed on each one of them. May I happily experience this good work!—May it be advancing in my soul! And may I be kept by the power, love, and faithfulness of God in Christ, to my complete and everlasting salvation!



### The Spiritual Worship of God.

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

—PHIL. iii. 3.

THIS is the distinguishing character of all real Christians. They are the true spiritual Israel of God, in covenant with Him, sanctified by His grace, and conformed to His image. The *worship* they pay to Him, is not of an outward and ceremonial kind; it proceeds from the heart, and is *spiritual* in its nature. It is performed under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and is suited to the nature of God, who is the all-perfect Spirit. They who are the true Israel of God, also *rejoice in Christ Jesus*. He is the object of their believing dependence; in Him their hearts rest, with an entire satisfaction, as the portion and happiness of their souls. All their boldness in approaching to God, and worshipping Him, is founded on Jesus Christ, His person, His mediation, and finished work.

Any outward privileges and advantages, which such enjoy in the fellowship of the visible Church, are not the object of their confidence. They *have no confidence in the flesh*. It is their earnest endeavour, to renounce all dependence on themselves, and to be more and more denied to everything but Jesus Christ Himself, as the foundation of their hope towards God, and for a happy eternity. Spiritual worship, and humble, self-denied dependence on Jesus Christ, and His righteousness, for our whole salvation, are leading characters of true and vital Christianity. They who have experienced them, are not satisfied with what they have already attained, but are earnestly desirous of still greater attainments in them. They desire to have still more intimate and spiritual fellowship with God, through Jesus Christ.—May such be my happy experience, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and in the lively exercise of faith and all saving graces!

**For the Last Day of the Month or Year.**

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus."—REV. xxii. 20.

As the promise of Christ's coming in the flesh, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, was the hope of believers under the Old Testament; so the "coming of Christ, the second time, without sin," and with the highest glory, "to" the complete "salvation" of His people, is the hope of believers under the New Testament dispensation. He will certainly and quickly come to judge the world, and to perfect the felicity and glory of His people. He hath *said* it, who cannot lie; and "He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." He often comes very suddenly and unexpectedly at death; and, compared with eternity, the time of His coming to judgment cannot be far distant; and "in an hour which men think not, the Son of man," the Lord of glory, "comes." To them who believe in Christ, however, the coming of Christ, grand, solemn, and important as it is, does not appear as an object of dread and terror.

On the other hand, while the real Christian firmly *believes* the certainty of this event, on the testimony of the faithful and true witness, he, at the same time, earnestly *desires* it. He longs and prays for it, as an event by which Christ shall be glorified, and the happiness and glory of His people perfected, not only in their own persons, but as that body of which He is the head. To them it affords the most *joyful* and pleasing *prospect*; they *prepare* for it, and act as in view of it, and under the solemn impressions it is calculated to produce.—May I be daily living in the faith and hope of this event, improving precious time and opportunities, and advancing in meetness for the heavenly state through Jesus Christ, that at last I may be put in possession of "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"

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